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14th July 2005

The European Patent Office
PB5818 Patentlaan 2
NL-2280 HV Rijswijk
Netherlands

Dear Sirs

Re: PCT Patent Application No. PCT/GB2004/050027
(Publication No. WO 2005/051593)
(Filed 18th November 2004)
claiming priority from
UK Patent Application No. 03 26927.1
(Filed 19th November 2003)
Applicant: Middlesex Silver Co. Limited
Inventor: Johns, Peter Gamon
"Silver solder or brazing alloys, and their use"
Case: MDX,007-PCT

For the attention of the International Unit

We write in response to the written opinion of the International Searching Authority and file herewith amended claims in triplicate.

Claims 1-4 are now concerned with a method of making a joint in STERLING SILVER and claims 5-7 are directed to Silver Solders or Brazing Alloys for use in the above method.


As acknowledged in the written opinion, D1 is concerned with a ternary brazing alloy for platinum ornaments, and the colour match is to platinum not silver. D2 is concerned with a brazing filler metal for brazing gold or platinum alloys, and again the colour match is to gold or platinum and not to silver. D3 is concerned with a brazing alloy for stainless steel and D4 is concerned with a brazing solder for hard metals. None of these references are concerned with a silver solder or brazing alloy of the silver-copper-zinc family which is colour matched to sterling silver and contains germanium. As explained in the applicants' specification the solders for use in the present method combine good colour with other desirable properties, particularly a relatively low melting point.

contn:-

A demand for a detailed International Preliminary Examination was filed on the 11th May 2005, and the first Written Opinion of the International Preliminary Examination Authority is awaited.

Would you please return the attached copy of this letter to acknowledge safe receipt hereof.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Cole'.

Paul Cole/zt
Authorised Representative
Chartered Patent Agent
European Patent Attorney

1. A method of making a joint in Sterling silver which includes using a silver solder or brazing alloy of the Ag-Cu-Zn family containing 10-30 wt% Cu, 8-15 wt % Zn, from 0.5 - 3 wt% Ge, optionally 0.05-0.4 wt % Si, optionally 1-3 wt% Sn, optionally 1ppm-0.3 wt% B, the balance being 55-77wt%, Ag, said solder being a colour match for said Sterling silver.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said Sterling silver is of content about Ag 92.5 wt%, Cu 6.3 wt%, Ge 1.2 wt %.
3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein the silver solder or brazing alloy contains 1.5-2.5 wt % Ge.
4. The method of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the silver or brazing alloy contains about 2 wt % Ge.
5. For use in the method of any preceding claim, a silver solder or brazing alloy of the Ag-Cu-Zn family containing 10-30 wt% Cu, 8-15 wt % Zn, from 0.5 - 3 wt% Ge, optionally 0.05-0.4 wt % Si, optionally 1-3 wt% Sn, optionally 1ppm-0.3 wt% B, the balance being 55-77wt%, Ag, said solder being a colour match for Sterling silver.
6. An alloy according to claim 5, which is in the form of rod, strip or wire.
7. An alloy according to claim 5, which is in the form of paste.